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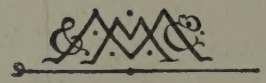
OUR BROTHER OF JOY.

WHEN FAITHS FLASH OUT.

WESLEY THE ANGLICAN



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WESLEY
THE ANGLICAN

BY

DAVID BAINES-GRIFFITHS, M.A.

MINISTER OF EDGEHILL CHURCH, NEW YORK

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TO

SAM HIGGINBOTTOM

OF

ALLAHABAD

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	ix
I.	ANTECEDENT	1
II.	SON OF THE MANSE	12
III.	THE SCHOLAR	17
IV.	THE BOOKMAN	25
V.	WESLEY'S "JOURNAL"	36
VI.	AN OXFORD DON IN GEORGIA	40
VII.	SERVANT OR SON?	50
VIII.	THE APOSTOLIC DAWN	60
IX.	METHODISM: A PERSONAL FAITH WITH SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES	77
X.	WESLEY THE CHURCHMAN	93
XI.	WESLEY THE HUMAN	133

INTRODUCTION

Wesley the Anglican had its origin in a paper read by the author before a group of professors and students at the General Theological Seminary (Protestant Episcopal), New York. There was a unanimous feeling on the part of all present, that the subject had been so uniquely and suggestively treated that the paper should be expanded and published in book form. Acting upon this request the author expanded the paper into this book.

In November of 1918, in response to reiterated invitations from the British Churches, the author, Rev. David Baines-

Griffiths, M.A., undertook a three months' mission among the Churches of England and Wales on behalf of the closer unity of the English-speaking peoples. He brought the manuscript of *Wesley the Anglican* with him to England and it was accepted by Macmillan & Co. While the book was in the press the author suddenly passed away at Liverpool. He was buried in the village of his birth, Llandudno, Wales. The land that gave him to America claimed him at his death. It was in the performance of a beautiful task of reconciliation between the country of his birth and the land of his adoption that he died.

Mr. Baines-Griffiths went to America upon the advice of Mr. Moody, whom he met in the course of the great revival. He was educated at Mr. Moody's schools at Mount Hermon and at Harvard University. After serving in various churches

he was finally called to the Edgehill Church, New York City, where for many years he exercised a unique and influential ministry. His two books, *Our Brother of Joy* and *When Faiths Flash Out*, reflect the rare quality of his sermons. During the period of his pastorate at this church he was also the reviewer of the philosophical and religious books for the *New York Tribune*, and a regular contributor to the editorial columns of *The Christian Work*. His memory will always remain a link between the two great English-speaking peoples, whom he loved equally.

FREDERICK LYNCH.

LONDON, *March* 6, 1919.

I

ANTECEDENT

When Henry VIII. was thirty years old he published his book entitled, *An Assertion of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther*, an adventure in the fields of authorship which had its results. One was that among the bales of merchandise fetched from the Continent the writings of Luther more and more found their way into the homes of England, thus augmenting the mass of freer thought to which pioneers like Wyckliffe and Tyndale and —later from another direction—Erasmus had been contributing. Another consequence of Henry's literary assault upon

the Wittenberg monk, his senior by eight years, was the winning of a fresh title, Defender of the Faith. By a Bull of October 26, 1521, the reigning pope, Leo X., conferred the new degree in divinity upon the debonair monarch who could be so chivalrous on occasion and so urbane when not provoked. The legend was to function in a way never dreamed of by the pontiff who bestowed it. Now and again a later ruler of England, a maculate Mary or a Caliban James II., might equal Henry VIII. in devotion to Catholic truth; yet the title, Defender of the Faith as current British coinage reminds us, was to be part of the official designation of the King of England in his capacity of supreme Governor of the Protestant Reformed Church of England as by law established.

Although of a mediaeval mind, and strongly Roman in sympathy, Henry

ultimately found the authority of the visible Church of Christ to be a serious bar to domestic projects of his own. Combining political ambitions with other personal considerations he caused the Convocation of Canterbury to declare in 1534, that "the Roman Bishop hath no greater jurisdiction given to him by God in this kingdom than any other foreign bishop." The Convocation of York gave its testimony in words not identical but similar. Lest we should suppose the action of the respective Convocations to have been voluntary and due to patriotic and freedom-loving impulses we must remind ourselves that the proceedings were owing to the persistent energy of the King's canny henchman, Thomas Cromwell. Having long accustomed himself to think in terms of a premier, it was becoming in Cromwell to advise that the reluctance of the clergy to take so

radical a course be dispelled by means of a threat of *praemunire*, the good old process of seizure upon failure to obey. The clergy, at least those who were not hanged, obeyed. Nor did the King, on his part, treat lightly his position as supreme governor of the newly made, or shall we say confiscated, Church. In matters of faith, where some special training has often been thought to be a pre-requisite for the holding of magisterial powers, this handsome occupant of the English throne deemed himself a sufficient decider. A priest named Lambert was haled before the theological majesty, accused of having adopted the views of Zwingli about the Lord's Supper, views that we now know to have been much in accord with those of Calvin, so far as these latter are reflected in the twenty-eighth of the Articles of the Church of England. The royal judge informed the cleric that the words "This

is My Body" settled the matter, and the priest was forthwith condemned to be burned to death. Men like Cardinal Fisher and Sir Thomas More, whose formal religious views were not unlike those of Henry himself, were dismissed this mortal life because they refused to acknowledge the supremacy, in the English part of the visible Church, of a secular ruler.[1] A widening retrospect enables us to see how sixteenth-century Catholics and seventeenth-century Separatists and nineteenth-century Tractarians could have agreed at least in one principle, that in all spiritual things or causes no temporal monarch could be supreme.

Although that fine title Defender of the Faith was seldom to do duty as the ensign of Catholic rule in England, it was fated to serve as the symbol of a régime as

[1] Robert I. Wilberforce, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Church-Authority, or, Reasons for recalling my Subscription to the Royal Supremacy* (1855).

rigid and inhuman as any papal tyranny from which the English folk, some from religious motives, some for reasons of state, and King Henry for a variety of reasons, had sought to be relieved. The absolutism of the political government of the Reformed Church was to become a black grievance when the awakened mind of England saw new horizons looming for the spirit of man. Nor was the despotic mania the exclusive possession of any one party. In the century later than Henry VIII., when the monarchy had been for the moment anaesthetized, and Commonwealth men were in the saddle, a like disposition prevailed. The main difference was as to who held the whip. Down to our day traces of the ignoble despotism have lingered; but for a flagrant example we go back to the year 1662, two years after the coronation of Charles II. The Prayer Book having been revised in what

would be called a party interest,[1] the Act of Uniformity required every clergyman to use the new book on and after St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1662. Before that date every parson, vicar, or other minister whatsoever was to declare publicly his unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the new revision of the new Book of Common Prayer. For the rank and file of the ministers of the Church the use of the prescribed liturgy involved little or no hardship. A demand yet more arbitrary was the requirement that certain clergy, of hitherto sound ecclesiastical standing, should submit to ordination at the hands of a bishop. Having already been lawfully ordained in the Church of England, they were bidden

[1] "It is curious and sad to think how much of dirty human passion underlies the Prayer Book; *e.g.* the word 'Schism' in the Litany was inserted in 1661. . . ." Diary of Stopford Brooke, June 10, 1861, quoted in L. P. Jacks's *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, p. 120.

submit to a process which, to them, could mean only a sacrilegious re-ordination. The Act of Uniformity further required that every clergyman promise upon oath that he would not take up arms against the King. It will be seen that, judged by these tests, neither our Lord nor His Apostles could have been accorded ministerial standing in the Church of 1662, and that if such a demand respecting the King had been in vogue in the American Colonies George Washington would never have become the father of his country. No humanity interposed to soften the rigours of this legislation which resembled the Conventicle Act in embodying what Andrew Marvell called "the quintessence of arbitrary malice." On St. Bartholomew's Day, slightly reminiscent of the bloody festival in France some ninety years before, over two thousand sons of the Church of England renounced their lives and went

forth into a homeless world. The searching light of historical inquiry does but make more clear the fact of their having chosen honour before comfort and the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the spoils of uniformity.

Among the victims of the Ejectment, "renowned," as Bishop Boyd Carpenter phrases it, "in the universities for their learning and in their parishes for their activity," were John Lightfoot and John Howe, Richard Baxter, Philip Henry, and John Owen. Among the men less renowned in their day was a John Wesley who in that same year was forced by the Act to leave his parish of Blandford. His father, who was still alive, had been compelled through the working of an earlier piece of legislation to relinquish the living of Allington in Dorsetshire. The younger man, endeavouring to preach after the Ejectment, was four times put in

prison. He died at the age of thirty-three, and the Vicar of Preston would not allow the priest's body to be buried in the church. A son, Samuel, had been born to the nonconforming churchman in the very year of grace 1662. In due time Samuel went to Oxford, where his grandfather and father had been before him, his father having had recognition from the vice-chancellor for progress in the Oriental tongues. Samuel Wesley was not to sustain the brief tradition of protest, for among contemporary nonconformists he found a spirit of acrid intolerance. The discovery confirmed him in a decision to turn to the ancestral Church and to take orders. When a curate in London he married the admirable Susannah, daughter of Dr. Annesley, the inflexible remonstrant, who himself had been a victim of the Separatist enactment of 1662.[1] Samuel

[1] Daniel Neal, *History of the Puritans*, ii. 301.

ANTECEDENT

Wesley was not friendly to the projects of the Romanist, James II. When William and Mary came to the throne the clergyman wrote a Defence of the Revolution and dedicated the work to Queen Mary. He was rewarded by being presented to the living of Epworth in Lincolnshire. In the Epworth Rectory Samuel's second son, named John, was born June 17, 1703. Charles Wesley was born six years later.

II

SON OF THE MANSE

On occasion the state of English politics could find their reflection in the parsonage at Epworth. The man of the house had favoured the accession of William and Mary, and at the domestic altar he was wont to pray for the rulers. The rector's wife happened to hold an entirely different opinion about these imported regalities, but being a dutiful spouse she pursued an industrious silence. About a year before William of Orange died the loyalist rector of Epworth became aware of the fact that the mistress of the manse never said Amen to the prayers for the King's Majesty. A pointed question procured a plain answer.

Susannah was a Jacobite. She did not believe that William was lawful King of England. The secret was out. Samuel Wesley vowed he would not live with Susannah until she was ready to say Amen to the prayer for King William. He rode off in a rage, and this curious rectory was minus a rector for toward twelve months. Then the death of the King conveniently allowed a reconciliation, inasmuch as neither husband nor wife had scruples about praying for Queen Anne.

Scientific pedagogy never had the opportunity to enlighten Susannah Wesley about the rearing of children. She herself had been well reared, and she needed no Froebel to tell her to live with her children. Indeed, we might ask, what else could she do? For she gave birth to no fewer than nineteen, of whom six came to mature years. What with daily schooling of the infants, tending them in smallpox and

other sicknesses, the rector's wife hardly lived in a doll's house. Fortunately she had brought to her duties not only a controlled spirit but a mind on which practical forms of education as well as the liberalizing influence of Greek and Latin had made an impression. A glimpse of Susannah's method is given us in the fact that none of the children, excepting Kezzy, was taught to read before the age of five. In Kezzy's case, says Mrs. Wesley significantly, "I was overruled, and she was more years in learning than any of the rest had been months. . . . One day was allowed the child wherein to learn its letters, and each of them did in that time know all its letters, great and small, except Molly and Nancy, who were a day and a half before they knew them perfectly, for which I then thought them very dull. But the reason why I thought them so was because the rest learned them so readily, and your brother Samuel,

who was the first child I ever taught, learned the alphabet in a few hours." [1]

Now it happened that a sense of public duty made the rector an assiduous attendant at meetings of Convocation. This was at an expense which his household could not properly afford. Also, it was at an expenditure of time somewhat to the disadvantage of the parish. During the periods of absence there was no Sunday afternoon service at Epworth. On the Sunday evenings the minister's wife would gather the family about her, pray with them, read a sermon, and then lead in religious conversation. Neighbours happening to come in were admitted to the circle. The numbers increased, and Mrs. Wesley was soon speaking to as many as two hundred people. When the absent rector was told that more were coming than the room would hold he felt impelled to write his wife a strong

[1] Southey's *Life of Wesley*, p. 9.

word of objection. Because of her sex he said such arrangements "looked particular." Moreover, a scandalized curate had been writing the rector about the same irregularities. Correspondence on this difficulty goes to show that Susannah Wesley was a woman with a mind, and a mind of her own. Although having no vote in the realm of England, she could on occasion bring things to pass. Hear the dutiful wife as she closes the discussion in which you are sure she had won the day :

"If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience ; but send me your positive command, in such full and express terms as may absolve me from guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

[1] Southey, p. 13.

III

THE SCHOLAR

On our way to finding, if we can, the hidings of the energy of John Wesley as of one exerting a religious influence "greater than that exercised by any individual Christian during the last three hundred years," [1] we are under compulsion to take account of his scholarship and of the breadth of his mental life. To begin with, nothing is clearer than that he came of intellectual stock. The paternal grandmother was a niece of Thomas Fuller, the wit and historian, of whom Coleridge said that he was incomparably the most sensible, the least pre-

[1] Wm. Boyd Carpenter, *Popular History of the Church of England*, p. 364.

judiced, great man of an age that boasted a galaxy of great men. Wesley's grandfather and namesake was, as we have seen, acknowledged a scholar in his University at Cambridge. The versatile rector of Epworth, John's father, graduated B.A. at Exeter College in the same University, was assuredly a man of parts. He published a life of Christ, a Latin commentary on the Book of Job, besides some minor writings and several volumes of verse. Indeed, his long poem on the Battle of Blenheim proved so acceptable—acceptable, that is, to the persons concerned—that the Duke of Marlborough made Samuel Wesley, sen., the chaplain of a regiment. John was prepared for college at the Charterhouse school in London, and he was entered at Christ Church, Oxford, when he was seventeen. By that time he had already made good progress in Hebrew, thanks to the tutelage of an older brother, Samuel, who was after-

wards headmaster at Blundell's. Conceded that the University was not in those days at its best estate, the undergraduate's training in the classics seems to have been of the typical Oxford quality, so that he was at home with his authors. From the year 1731 it became the life-long habit of John and Charles Wesley to correspond with each other in Latin. Long before he left the University he had accumulated material for a critical annotation of Horace. Seeing that Wesley was endowed with a relentlessly logical mind, it is not surprising to learn that logic was with him a subject of especial devotion. The narrative goes to show that logic was, to him, something that had to do with the business of life. So it is not without good grounds that Mr. Paul Elmer More, in one of his Shelburne Essays, touches on the "evangelical absolutism" of Wesley; or that Baron Friedrich von Hügel, the accomplished Roman

Catholic scholar, should speak of him as "the man of absolute judgments."[1]

While our undergraduate was a fairly diligent student, it must be remembered that in the first years at Oxford he was under no sense of vocation. He was the man of taste, the man of the world, a lively lad intent on what was going on; seeing *Macbeth* or *Richard III.* performed at Drury Lane; reading the current plays, *Half-Pay Officers*, *Royal Convert*, *The Orphan*, *The Silent Woman*; dancing at a week-end party; putting in an hour or two at tennis; turning off light verse, or translating something as nonsensical; somewhat thriftless, and giving his father not a few anxious moments over money matters. For a year or so after taking his degree he has associations of a pleasant sort which will be relinquished before he is steadily set on his course.

[1] *The Mystical Element of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 4, *n.*

There was his response to the apparition of Mary Granville, distantly related to the Garrett Wesley who was created Baron of Mornington. It was this Lord Mornington who afterwards desired to make Charles Wesley his heir. Mary Granville was the widow of Alexander Pendarves, and she was three years older than John Wesley. One gets glimpses of the amiable woman as she shares the life of her day in London, boating on the Thames in a party where the Duchess of Ancaster provides amusement by catterwauling some piece out of *The Beggar's Opera*, jaunting to Greenwich, attending Court, and then sitting by the side of Hogarth while painting a picture of the Wesley family, and obtaining a promise that he would give her instructions in drawing, and in the midst of this fluttering sort of existence receiving letters frequently from Oxford, young Wesley calling himself Cyrus and she answering

with a no less Grecian name. Is not the picture calculated to raise questions of a sort to be resolved only by an omniscient Committee on Contingencies?

Wesley had proceeded Master of Arts in February 1727, when in his twenty-fourth year. The Disputation comprised three lectures: "De Anima Brutorum," "De Julio Caesare," "De Amore Dei." It is a pretty point whether the reputation which the Exercise won for him took its rise from the intrinsic value of the material or from the entirely generous range of the repertory. By this time, and increasingly as he comes to work in the wider world, there is no mistaking Wesley's scholarly temper. Nor did any asceticism practised in other regards operate toward the nullifying of his intellectual instincts. He was for ever putting to best account his native endowment and the disciplines of his University years. It may be that a scholar's

self-consciousness was deepened rather than the reverse by his contacts in public ministry. "Yet I could not reach their hearts," he observes one day in mature life when he has been preaching to a company of soldiers; "the words of a scholar did not affect them like those of a dragoon or a grenadier." Let it be noted about this man for whom claims of scholarship are being made that for toward a half-century he rarely sat at a student's desk to read, although he was compelled to be indoors when he wrote his books. "Leisure and I," he once said at the later period of his Oxford residence, "have taken leave of one another. I propose to be busy as long as I live." The resolution led to the rule and custom of refusing to attempt any more work than he could accomplish with a quiet mind. He lived by time-table, and perhaps Southey was not far wrong when he declared that no conqueror or poet was ever

more ambitious than John Wesley. "It is absolutely needful for such a one as me," he wrote his father at Epworth, "to follow with all possible care and vigilance that wise advise of Mr. Herbert:

Still let thy mind be bent; still plotting how
And when, and where, the business may be done."

IV

THE BOOKMAN

To ask consideration for Wesley as a man of letters might seem like taking advantage of the eighteenth century's reputation for dulness; or if one believes that the England of the period was in reality brilliant with bookmen, then the attempt to snatch a laurel for our clergyman might seem a presumption. Was not this the age of Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield among letter-writers; of Burke and Junius and Thomas Paine among the expositors of political theory; of Adam Smith and David Hume and Erasmus Darwin among philosophers; of Richardson and Henry Fielding and Smollett and Sterne among

novelists; of Garrick and Goldsmith and Sheridan among dramatists; of Thomas Gray and William Cowper and William Blake among poets? Moreover, there was Samuel Johnson as representative man of letters. Wesley and the literary magistrate were aware of each other, too. Indeed Boswell describes Johnson as a Methodist in religion. And what could better set off the distinctive leanings of the men than a remark of Johnson's, made when he is sixty-nine and Wesley five years older? "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."[1]

Admitting that, to the world, Wesley appears pre-eminently the man of action, it remains not only possible but necessary

[1] Boswell's *Johnson*, April 1778.

to take into account an industrious and brilliant vitality of intellect. From an itinerant preacher you will not expect a continuously wide sort of reading. Enough, we say, if so engrossed a toiler is able to retain and employ the results of the labour of student years. What we find is that Wesley early learned to organize his working day. Was he compelled to walk long distances? He discovered that it was possible to walk twenty-five miles a day without damage, and that for ten miles of the journey it was practicable to read without inconvenience. Most of his travelling as a clergyman, some five thousand miles a year, was done on horseback. On horseback, therefore, did he manage to get much of his reading done, and it is an astonishing number of books to which he is able to give careful attention. In religion and theology you will expect him to be a persistent reader. You are not

surprised that he should have read the works of Swedenborg, the "awakening words" of Ephraem Syrus, à Kempis, the *Theologia Germanica*, Luther's *Galatians*, Calvin's *Account of Servetus* (in the reading of which Wesley's sympathies are all with Servetus), the writings of Jacob Boehme, Lowth's *Hebrew Poetry*, Butler's *Analogy*, the *Pensées* of Pascal, Madam Guyon's *Les Torrents spirituels*. His tastes take him also to works ancient and modern in philosophy, in aesthetics, to histories not only of antiquity but of the most recent rebellions, and to studies in natural history and physics. Here are authors like Macchiavelli and Mandeville and Bolingbroke. For poets, Shakespere, Milton, Gray, Pope and Prior, Torquato, Tasso with Ariosto for a foil, Ossian the rage of Europe, and that mildly repining preferment-seeker, the well-groomed otherworldling, Edward Young of the *Night*

Thoughts. Nor is the literature all on one level. Lectures on Elocution, Irish grammars, the *Émile* of Rousseau, Voltaire's *Henriade* and *Memoirs*, the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, Priestley's *Treatise on Electricity* : might these titles, a few taken from among hundreds, serve at least to indicate a mental liberality on the part of the preacher ? This is the man who could read a French play or a Greek tragedy as he rode, and could dismount to preach to a company thrilled to the soul with the sense of an eternal life.

In Wesley the zest of the bookman was always in subjection to the zeal of the missioner. However terse and unlaboured his comment on a given volume may be, you know for all that he is measuring a piece of literature not only for intrinsic literary quality but for its relation to certain great human ends. If sympathy is the first canon of criticism, then his way

of approaching a book would compare favourably with the mode of the literary inquisitors of his generation. Of "animadversions" he is fully capable, yet if he is at times severe in his strictures he maintains himself far above pettiness. After he has read Gerard's *Meditationes Sacrae*, his comment is, ". . . a book recommended to me in the strongest terms. But alas, how was I disappointed! They have masterly strokes, but are in general trite and flat, the thoughts being as poor as the Latin." Phrases of Wesley's in regard to a sixteenth-century mystic have often been quoted, but the entire passage is useful for the light it sheds on his reading conscience:

> Here I met once more with the works of a celebrated author, of whom many great men cannot speak without rapture and the strongest expressions of admiration. I mean Jacob Boehme. The book I now opened was his *Mysterium Magnum, or Exposition of Genesis.* Being conscious of my ignorance, I earnestly besought

God to enlighten my understanding. I seriously considered what I read, and endeavoured to weigh it in the balance of the sanctuary. And what can I say concerning the part I read? I can and must say thus much (and that with as full evidence as I can say that two and two make four), it is sublime nonsense; inimitable bombast; fustian not to be paralleled! All of a piece with his inspired interpretation of the word *tetragrammaton*, on which (mistaking it for the unutterable Name itself, whereas it means only a word consisting of four letters) he comments with such exquisite gravity and solemnity, telling you the meaning of every syllable of it![1]

A grouping of reports made by Wesley upon his reading would give welcome sidelights both on the books discussed and upon the man himself. When he first gets hold of Butler's *Analogy* he finds it a strong and well-written treatise, but he is afraid it is far too deep for their understanding to whom it is primarily addressed. Twenty-two years later he is again reading "that fine book," and again he feels that

[1] *Journal* (Everyman edition), i. 376.

the *Analogy* is fated to pay the penalty of its excellence :

> . . . I doubt it is too hard for most of those for whom it is chiefly intended. Freethinkers, so called, are seldom close thinkers. They will not be at the pains of reading such a book as this. One that would profit them must dilute his sense, or they will neither swallow nor digest it.[1]

The historical treatises and the biographies perused by our presbyter usually obtained a prompt reaction. The facts as to England's mistreatment of Ireland are not lost upon him, and he puts the Christianity of Oliver Cromwell on a par with that of Henry VIII. Nor do his Tory predilections forbid the exclamation, " Oh, what a blessed governor was that good-natured man, so called, King Charles the Second ! Bloody Mary was a lamb, a mere dove in comparison of him." The eighteenth-century infidel might scorn the religious ideas of

[1] *Journal*, iii. 329.

Wesley, but he could hardly bring a charge of obscurantism. Wesley at least understood, if he could not accept, the viewpoint of the then prevailing type of scepticism. His own moral idealism was all the stronger for his having given serious study to a different ethic. For example, he is not ignorant of the influence of Macchiavelli, in whose formal treatises the world found a reasoned system, the flowering of the principle for which Sophocles makes King Ulysses stand sponsor.

> Now, for a day's short fragment, lend yourself
> To ruthlessness ; and then to after-time
> Be called the most religious of mankind.[1]

Once, when voyaging along the Atlantic coast, Wesley, having procured "a celebrated book, the Works of Nicholas Machiavel," sets himself carefully to read and consider it :

> I began with a prejudice in his favour ; having

[1] *Philoctetes*, 83-85.

been informed he had often been misunderstood, and greatly misrepresented. I weighed the sentiments that were less common, transcribed the passages wherein they were contained; compared one passage with another, and endeavoured to form a cool, impartial judgment. And my cool judgment is, that if all the other doctrines of devils which have been committed to writing since letters were in the world, were collected together in one volume, it would fall short of this; and that should a Prince form himself by this book, so calmly recommending hypocrisy, treachery, lying, robbery, oppression, adultery, whoredom and murder of all kinds, Domitian or Nero would be an angel of light, compared to that man.[1]

In an age when every man had to declare himself in respect to the merits of a long debate, Wesley was an unflinching partisan of the memory of Mary, Queen of Scots. His examination of contending historians leaves him with a fine scorn for George Buchanan, "Queen Elizabeth's pensioner, and her other hireling writers." His

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 43.

opinion is that the much-injured Scots Queen appears to have been far the greatest woman of that age, exquisitely beautiful in her person, of a fine address, of a deep unaffected piety, and of a stronger understanding, even in youth, than Queen Elizabeth had at threescore. By way of contrast to this enthusiasm there is his reflection after reading the celebrated life of St. Catherine of Genoa, a biography which is now discovered to have been clogged with legend. "Mr. Leslie calls one, 'a devil of a saint.' I am sure this was 'a fool of a saint'; that is, if it was not the folly of her historian, who has aggrandized her into a mere idiot."[1]

[1] *Journal*, iii. p. 76.

V

WESLEY'S "JOURNAL"

ALTHOUGH we are dealing with a master who chose holiness before humanism, the fact need not be lost upon us that Wesley has come to recognition for his achievements as a man of letters. Just as it was at one time a surprise to evangelical worshippers at the shrine of Bunyan to be told that their favourite author was a foremost writer of English prose, so it was left to the more detached outsider—such as Edward Fitz-Gerald, the translator of Omar Khayyám—to bespeak attention for the *Journal* of Wesley as one of the masterpieces of English literature. Mr. Thomas Seccombe, in his handbook *The Age of Johnson*, devotes a

page or two to the *Journal*, as being "a work of literary power inspired by religion and permeated by a force that is almost superhuman." He adds: "The name of Wesley is venerated wherever English is spoken, but his *Journal* is not enough read. It is a great book in every way. . . ." Not only is it a monument of incredible exertions. It is itself a piece of prodigious penmanship, for it contains over seven hundred thousand words. The first entry is dated October 14, 1735, when Wesley is thirty-two years old, and the last on October 24, 1790, when he is in his eighty-seventh year. My own attention to this treasure was aroused one Sunday evening when I was with Sir William Robertson Nicoll, in his library at Frognal at Hampstead. The volumes happened to be in sight, for Sir William had just been writing for *The British Weekly* an article on John Wesley's three saints—Lopez, de Renty,

and John Fletcher. On returning to wonted scenes I promptly borrowed from a clergyman in the neighbourhood what proved to be a non-indexed and rather ugly edition of the *Journal*. Since then the work has been issued in more manageable forms, particularly in the all-sufficing Curnock edition.

The giving of oneself to this human document might well reward a reader with exhilarations such as came to Keats on first looking into Chapman's *Homer*, or as came to Hazlitt on his first acquaintance with Coleridge. Mr. Seccombe recalls the saying of the Wesleys' kinsman, Thomas Fuller, about some person who had "drunk more of Jordan than of Helicon." It is surely part of the charm of the *Journal* that he who reads it has access to both streams. I remember that as Sir William was so kindly giving me impressions from his recent reading, the outstanding thing was the

stark loneliness of Wesley in England in the hour of his spiritual accolade.

One man against a stone-walled city of sin.

"There is hardly any book like it," writes this accomplished critic. "Its shrewdness, its wit, its wisdom, its knowledge are bordered with a pale edge of fire, the spiritual passion of the great apostle's soul." And again: "There is no book, I humbly think, in all the world like John Wesley's *Journal*. It is pre-eminently the book of the resurrection life lived in this world. . . . Indeed, it stands out solitary in all Christian literature, clear, detached, columnar."

VI

AN OXFORD DON IN GEORGIA

Even in undergraduate days of relative indifference young Wesley had met the requirement of attending services of Holy Communion at least three times in the year. The occasions were for him, as for any sincere communicant, times of self-inquisition. At the age of twenty-one he seems to have turned with decision to the question of a career. At twenty-two he is being urged by his father to take holy orders. Then it is that he begins to ask guidance of teachers in the life of the soul. À Kempis is one of these, but the other-worldliness of the author of the *Imitation* repels him as unsound. Jeremy Taylor's

Holy Living and Dying appeals to him forcibly, and later he is particularly helped by reading William Law. In 1725 Wesley is ordained by Bishop Potter of Oxford. In the following year he is, to his father's delight, made a Fellow of Lincoln College. Eight months after election to the Fellowship he is appointed Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes. In the latter capacity it was his business to preside at the debates. From this time onward he is regarding his vocation with a deepening seriousness. Certain associations deemed by him to be a hindrance to robust religious life are relinquished. In November of 1729 he with his brother Charles and two others agreed to spend three or four evenings in the week together for the purpose of reading over some classics which each had previously read in private. On Sunday evenings they would read a book in divinity. The distress of a man imprisoned for

murder having been brought to the notice of one of the members of the small circle, there was a disposition to join together in an effort to help the criminal. Before long the four scholars were joined by a few others. Soon the question was raised among them, "Whether it does not concern all men of all conditions to imitate Him as much as they can, who went about doing good?" In this inquiry they were, as we see, endeavouring to make the biography of Jesus the social programme of the Church. Their question takes us to the sources of the Evangelical movement considered as a phenomenon of social regeneration. Practical measures for the aid of the sick, the hungry, the naked and ignorant, and the spiritually destitute were of the marrow of the purpose of this congenial coterie. They determined to live by rule and method as to academic duties, as to neighbourly philanthropies, and

as to the culture of the spirit. In furthering the last-named project they turned to ancient custom and observed the Wednesday and Friday fasts. It was also their practice to communicate frequently. Along with this, at least on Wesley's part, there went considerable rubrical and antiquarian ardour. For instance, he is found inquiring in what parishes the sacramental wine is mixed with water, since he would consider it his duty to communicate in the church more nearly following that ancient Catholic mode. Thus, for the Oxford don, do many years pass. in diligence of business, in rigorous churchmanship, and in earnest quest of salvation. When he at last emerges from the University *milieu*, and at the age of thirty-two sets forth with his brother Charles and two other collegians in a mission to the Indians of Georgia, the individual aspect of the undertaking is rarely lost sight of. "Our end in leaving

our native country was not to avoid want, God having given us plenty of temporal blessings, nor to gain the dung or dross of worldly honour; but singly this, to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God."

On learning of the Georgia project, an acquaintance said to Wesley, "What is this, sir? Are you turned Quixote too? Will nothing serve you but to encounter windmills?" In the sequel nothing noteworthy came of the effort to reach the Indians, and the S.P.G. missionaries had their hands full in trying to minister to the necessities of the Georgia colonists. To see what manner of men these were who exchanged Oxford for Savannah and Frederica, one has only to turn to Wesley's account of the outward journey on a vessel that carried many German emigrants:

We now began to be a little regular. Our common way of living was this: From four in

the morning until five, each of us used private prayer. From five to seven we read the Bible together, carefully comparing it (that we might not lean to our own understandings) with the writings of the earliest ages. At seven we breakfasted. At eight were the public prayers. From nine to twelve I usually learned German, and Mr. Delamotte, Greek. My brother writ sermons and Mr. Ingham instructed the children. At twelve we met to give an account to one another what we had done since our last meeting, and what we designed to do before our next. About one we dined. The time from dinner to four we spent in reading to those whom each of us had taken in charge, or in speaking to them severally as need required. At four were the evening prayers; when either the Second Lesson was explained, as it always was in the morning, or the children were catechised, or instructed before the congregation. From five to six we again used private prayer. From six to seven I read in our cabin to two or three of the passengers (of whom there were about eighty English on board), and each of my brethren to a few more in theirs. At seven I joined with the Germans in their public service, while Mr. Ingham was reading between the decks to as many as desired to hear. At eight we met again,

to exhort and instruct one another. Between nine and ten we went to bed, where neither the roaring of the sea nor the motion of the ship could take away the refreshing sleep which God gave us.[1]

Without pausing to consider how much more industrious our seafaring priests might have been had they only been initiated in the secrets of modern "efficiency," it may be worth while to look at further indications of Wesley's tendency to treat seriously his commission as a priest in the Church. About a fortnight after reaching Savannah the newly arrived Ordinary jots down the item :

Mary Welch, aged eleven days, was baptized according to the custom of the first Church, and the rule of the Church of England. The child was ill then, but recovered from that hour.

No opportunist comprehension nor diplomatic dread of extremes here. Rules, you see, are rules, and the baby must be im-

[1] *Journal*, i. 16.

mersed at baptism. On the same subject there is a further entry :

> I was asked to baptize a child of Mr. Parker's, second bailiff of Savannah ; but Mrs. Parker told me, "Neither Mr. Parker nor I will consent to its being dipped." I answered, "If you certify that your child is weak, it will suffice, the rubric says, to pour water upon it." She replied, "Nay, the child is not weak, but I am resolved it shall not be dipped." This argument I could not confute. So I went home ; and the child was baptized by another person.

Nor had Wesley been in Savannah long before he began dividing the public prayers according to the original appointment of the Church ("still observed in a few places in England"). The morning service began at five. The communion office, with the sermon, at eleven. The evening service at about three. On one occasion the martinet director feels constrained to reprove a young woman, Mrs. Williamson, for misbehaviour. As she is far from show-

ing signs of penitence he repels her from the Lord's Table. The matter is complicated by the fact that the lady, previous to her marriage, had been for some time engrossed in a friendship with Wesley, and only his austere interpretation of priestly duty had stood in the way of a betrothal. The day after repelling Sophia Williamson from the Sacrament, he is arrested for defaming the lady. When brought before the Bailiff of Savannah, Wesley answers that this is an ecclesiastical affair, with which the civil authorities have nothing to do. Then, at the request of the young woman's uncle, he writes his explanations to Sophia :

> The rules whereby I proceed are these : "So many as intend to be partakers of the holy Communion, shall signify their names to the Curate, at least some time the day before." This you did not do.
>
> "And if any of those . . . have done any wrong to his neighbours so that the Congregation be thereby offended ; the Curate shall . . .

advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's Table until he have openly declared himself to have truly repented." If you offer yourself at the Lord's Table on Sunday, I will advertise you (as I have done more than once) wherein you have done wrong: And when you have openly declared yourself to have truly repented, I will administer to you the mysteries of God.

VII

SERVANT OR SON?

In the year 1736, and in the month of May of that year, when John Wesley was scandalizing the Savannah colonists by refusing to baptize a healthy child with any mode other than that prescribed by the Church of England, namely, by immersion, an English Bishop, Joseph Butler of Durham, was giving to the world his famous book, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature.* In his advertisement his lordship took occasion to say :

> It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry ; but that it is

now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.

The social and religious conditions of those decades have many times been delineated, as in the ample pages of W. E. H. Lecky. In brief space they have been compactly described by Samuel Parkes Cadman in his brilliant study of Wesley, in the volume *The Three Religious Leaders of Oxford.* For our present purpose Bishop Butler's comment needs but little supplement. Green, the historian, quotes Montesquieu as reporting, after a visit to England, "In the higher circles of society every one laughs if one talks of religion." Lord Chesterfield, who ought not to have been hard to please, is found bewailing the low morals of the people. Never was the

tone of Oxford so poor, and it was conceded that both the Universities were able to ruin their students. Further on in the century Edward Gibbon spent fourteen months at Magdalen College. "To the University of Oxford," he says, "I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother." It was of one of his instructors at Oxford that Gibbon said, "He remembered that he had a salary to receive, and forgot that he had a duty to perform." As for Lord Chesterfield's complaint of a "remarkable licentiousness in the stage," it can be matched by the remark of a philosopher, William Wollaston, whose work, *The Religion of Nature Delineated*, was first published in 1722. The book reached a circulation of over ten thousand copies. It was highly valued by Bishop Butler, and it was a favourite book of Queen Caroline's. Hav-

ing occasion to discuss the marriage troth, Wollaston provides his page with a footnote reading thus: "The form is still extant in our public offices, and may be seen by such as have forgotten it." It is a period in the State when a Robert Walpole can flourish like the green bay-tree. It is a period in the Church when a bishop could be far distant from his diocese, could court the Mall and be devoted to London in the season. "Our clergy," writes John Brown, as late as 1757, in *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, "have become, and deserve to become, contemptible because they neglect their duties in order to slumber in stalls, haunt levees, or follow the gainful trade of election jobbing."[1] The Bishop of Ely, in assigning the living of an unhealthy fen-parish to his well-connected friend Thomas Whalley, does so with the express stipula-

[1] Thomas Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*, p. xxiv.

tion that Whalley shall never enter into residence. So, as Wilberforce put it, you have the picture, behind this amiable and typical product, of a curate starving upon a pittance and doing the rector's work. As for the spiritual heights attained in the churches, it was a time when an orthodox clergyman was expected in his preaching to show the worldly advantages of good conduct.

At the age of thirty-four John Wesley is returning from the coasts of Georgia to the shores of England. Nor does he come with such dream of ecclesiastical consequence as moved the soul of another Oxford churchman, who ninety-five years later is making a journey from Palermo to the homeland. Newman turns his face toward England with the conviction that he has a work to do. A sense of mission is at the heart of the lyric, "Lead, kindly Light." With Wesley, all through the months of his exile in Georgia, the quest

of salvation is his one concern. As he nears the English coast he writes, "I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh! who shall convert me?" And having reached his native land, he sums up the more than two years of missionary life with the exclamation, "This, then, have I learned in the ends of the earth, that I am fallen short of the glory of God."

Coming from one who for years has been living so zealous a life, does the language seem overwrought? Not when we see how the more introspective side of Wesley's career is bound up with the practical. To dismiss the subjective phase as a negligible factor would be to miss the secret of that influence which made him the pioneer of a more spacious religion in the England of his day. Brisk and business-like as he had been in the duties of the religious life, he was yet to discover that his devotion had been a perfect bondage;

that his had been, as he vividly described it, the faith of a servant rather than the faith of a son. It was the Moravians on shipboard, outward bound, whose composure in time of danger contrasted so strongly with the perturbations of others, who gave to the much-occupied, not to say officious, young clergyman a hint of his lack. It was Mr. Spangenberg, one of their pastors in Savannah, who meets the newcomer with the gentle inquiry, "Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" The language is Scriptural and the question true to the intention of St. Paul, but the question is one that Wesley knows not how to answer. It is Peter Böhler, of the Church of Herrnhuth, who, on Wesley's return to England, is able to show him still more clearly the need of the emancipating "faith of a son." Böhler is the man "by whom, in the hand of the great God," he was,

"on Sunday the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief; of want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." There is a special propriety, it would seem, in Wesley's use of Pauline phrases in giving an account of his own spiritual struggle and deliverance. Both the Apostle and the Anglican were dashing young religionists, who, after a period of spirited churchmanship, came to an end of self-sufficiency, and came to see in the spontaneity of a sense of sonship a more excellent way than that of a laborious legalism straining at the propitiation of the Higher Powers. Not to press the parallel, both men went through a liberating crisis which involved what the theologians might call a change from the pagan view to the Christian view of God.

For Wesley and his friends the taking literally of truths which the Church had always been setting forth in its formularies had an influence that was revolutionary.

Of the effect of Peter Böhler's words we hear Wesley saying, "Oh, what a work has God begun since his coming into England! Such an one as shall never come to an end, till heaven and earth pass away."[1] An entry in the *Journal* on May 10, in that year of grace 1738, alludes to the vicar of Islington, Mr. Stoneham, as having become convinced of "the truth as it is in Jesus"; convinced, that is to say, of the difference between the faith of a servant and the faith of a son, and ready to espouse the latter as the Gospel prerogative, even though there is not at once given to the inquirer an inward serenity answering to what St. Paul described as the peace of God. Wesley's persuasion as to the possibilities of the inner life was a conviction not immediately followed by the guerdon of simple faith. In the early weeks after the return from Georgia he has access to the

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 91.

pulpit of many a London parish, and the truth which had before been "bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul" is set forth as a Gospel ere yet the preacher has himself entered into the beatitude. The days of passionate preaching are days also of earnest seeking. There are meetings of friends for conference and supplication. A refreshing letter comes from Peter Böhler assuring Wesley of his love and prayers. The prayer was not to wait long for answer: "Ut gustare et tunc videre possis, quam vehementer te Filius Dei amaverit et hucusque amet, et ut sic confidere possis in eo omni tempore, vitamque ejus in te et carne tua sentire." If the social consequences of the Methodist rising were anticipated in the activities of the little club at Oxford, then may we not say that the irresistible *élan* of the movement discloses its secret in the aspiration voiced in such a prayer as this of Böhler's.

VIII

THE APOSTOLIC DAWN

To read our churchman's account of the occurrences of the twenty-fourth day of that month of May 1738, so fraught with benefit for aftertimes, is to feel something of a first thrill of dawn:

I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on those words: ". . . There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature." Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, "Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord. . . ."

In the evening I went, very unwillingly, to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was

reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, in Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.[1]

Henceforth the face of the skies was changed for this man. In a deep sense is it true that his life thereafter knew no cloud. Out of the exhilarating, childlike confidence in the Father God he spoke to men of their privileges in the life of the soul; spoke as plainly, so artlessly, yet with such valour, that the note of authority was immediately felt. Indeed, since his home-coming, the authentic tone was detected whenever he preached "assurance" as a boon to be believed in, even though he could not at the moment lay claim to its interior possession. The abundant

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 102.

formalism of the day was disposed to treat the doctrine as an outlandish thing, and the preacher stands forth in strange distinction against the apathy of the age. In the diocese of London parish after parish refused to let him be heard in the church a second time. Let the *Journal* tell us of some of those first rejections :

> *Feb.* 5.—In the afternoon I was desired to preach at St. John the Evangelist's. I did so on those strong words, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." I was afterward informed, many of the best of the parish were so offended, that I was not to preach there any more.
>
> *Feb.* 12.—I preached at St. Andrew's, Holborn, on, "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor and have not charity. . . ." O hard sayings! Who can hear them? Here too, it seems, I am to preach no more.[1]

The unworldly scorn of scorn which Newman so much admired in his patron St. Philip Neri was more than matched by Wesley's conviction that contempt and

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 82.

despising were an inevitable accompaniment of fidelity to the highest choices. To Wesley the "despisings" were as much a badge as was "neglect" to St. Philip Neri.

A week later Wesley is preaching at the Castle in Oxford. On the next Sunday he is again preaching in London churches—at six in the morning at St. Lawrence's, at ten in St. Katherine's Cree Church, in the afternoon at St. John's, Wapping. At the first service, so he learns, his preaching gave offence, but he is asked to preach in these places ten weeks later :

Sunday, May 7.—I preached at St. Lawrence's in the morning, and afterward at St. Katherine's Cree Church. I was enabled to speak strong words at both, and was therefore the less surprised at being informed, I was not to preach any more in either of those churches.

Tuesday, 9.—I preached at Great St. Helen's, to a very numerous congregation. . . . My heart was now so enlarged to declare the love of

God to all that were oppressed by the devil, that I did not wonder in the least when I was afterwards told, "Sir, you must preach here no more."

Sunday, 28.—(This is the Sunday following his conscious possession of "the faith of a son.") This day I preached, in the morning, at St. George's, Bloomsbury, on, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"; and, in the afternoon, at the chapel in Long Acre, on God's justifying the ungodly; the last time, I understand, I am to preach at either. "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."[1]

Intimations of the same forbidding sort are given Wesley when he preaches at St. Ann's, Aldersgate; at St. Bennett's, Paul's Wharf; at St. John's, Clerkenwell; at St. Swithin's; at the Savoy Chapel and at St. Clement's in the Strand. Elsewhere there was better fortune. There are parishes where he is eagerly welcomed, and the preaching takes increasing hold upon the country. By the end of the year, although he had spent nearly four months in

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 83 ff.

Germany, the work has gathered power. In December he writes :

> Sunday, 24th, I preached at Great St. Bartholomew's in the morning, and at Islington in the afternoon ; where we had the blessed Sacrament every day this week, and were comforted on every side. Wednesday, 27th, I preached at Basingshaw church ; Sunday, 31st, to many thousands, in St. George's, Spitalfields. And to a yet more crowded congregation at Whitechapel, in the afternoon, I declared those glad tidings. . . .

As time went on Wesley did more than preach in the London churches, and in the chapel of his College and in the University Church of St. Mary's. Societies for the promotion of spiritual life were found so fruitful that they grew with the growth of interest in the re-discovered Evangel. Dr. Cadman, in the valuable essay to which we have referred, draws attention to the fact, now well established, that it was not among a group of Moravians but in an Anglican

society that the seeker was taking counsel in the hour when his heart was "strangely warmed." Wesley and his friends found warrant "in the commandment of God by St. James" for the arrangement to meet at stated intervals to confess "our faults one to another, and pray for one another, that we may be healed." They agreed that the persons so meeting be divided into several bands, or little companies, none of them consisting of fewer than five or more than ten persons; "that every one in order speak as freely, plainly, and concisely as he can, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, since the last time of meeting; that all the bands have a conference at eight every Wednesday evening, begun and ended with singing and prayer." Candidates for membership in the societies were for two months regarded as on trial before becoming members in the complete sense. Every fourth Saturday was to

be observed as a day of general intercession, and the Sunday seven-night following was set apart for a general love-feast, from seven until ten in the evening. Apart from its resemblance to Catholic models, the plan was one admirably adapted to conserve the spiritual harvests that were immediately to appear.

Deferring for the present any attempt to define the quality of John Wesley's churchmanship, we may at least observe that from the beginning he was a punctilious presbyter, that what he did amid the scenes of the vast spiritual awakening among his countrymen was done as a priest of the Church of England, and that his companions in labour were clergymen of the same Establishment. In any extraordinary development of religious devotion extra agencies are likely to be brought into operation, as in the apostolates of St. Paul and St. Francis. The period now under

notice was marked, as we know, by impressive ethical triumphs; but the moral, practical, and more external results followed rather than preceded the inner and spiritual transformation of thousands of men and women. There were rectors of parishes who found, to their joy, that people hitherto unreached by the Church were now coming into its fellowship. Church edifices were not adequate for the gatherings of hearers and inquirers. A Bishop of London felt moved to complain that the crowded attendance at multiplied services of Holy Communion left his clergy without opportunity to dine. Is there not a touch of parable in Wesley's report of a Sunday at Builth, in 1747? "I then began in the churchyard, notwithstanding the north-east wind, to call sinners to repentance. More than all the town were gathered together in that pleasant vale, and made the woods and mountains echo while they sang:

Ye mountains and vales,
In praises abound!
Ye hills and ye dales,
Continue the sound:

Break forth into singing,
Ye trees of the wood;
For Jesus is bringing
Lost sinners to God."

George Whitefield had led the way in preaching in the fields as soon as the audiences became too large to be housed. Despite "little improprieties of speech and manner," not unobserved by his fastidious colleague, Whitefield was humbly followed by Wesley in the adventurous modes of ministry. When Wesley visits Bristol, where already his colleague has seen amazing instances of amendment and regeneration in the lives of the colliers, the sight of Whitefield's open-air speaking makes an impression:

I could scarce reconcile myself to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set

me an example on Sunday ; having been all my life, till very lately, so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church.

Two days after, he writes :

In the evening, Mr. Whitefield being gone, I begun expounding our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (one pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also) to a little society. . . .

An entry for the day following has this :

At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people.

In June 1739, that is in the second year of the religious renewal, Wesley goes one day with Whitefield to Blackheath, where he preaches to a crowd numbering from twelve to fourteen thousand. The thorough way in which he gave himself to the out-door ministry was rather a proof of Wesley's

ardour than any indication of his tastes. "To this day," he says, in his seventieth year, "field-preaching is a cross to me." The practice did not obtain approval from the reigning respectabilities. Wesley, who was as alert as the objectors in detecting the ceremonial lack, was not to be deterred from the use of such tried and proved measures. As for the relative decency of things, he humorously retorts on the critics that the highest indecency could on occasion be witnessed at St. Paul's, when a considerable part of the congregation are asleep. The question resolved itself to this, "Whether it is not better that men should go to heaven by irregular methods, or regularly go to the devil?"

Leaving no stone unturned in the effort to bring a liberating message to the common people of England, this man, of whom Macaulay said that his eloquence and logical acuteness might have made him eminent in

literature, and that his genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, was to cultivate simplicity for the love of God. In detachment from lesser concerns he was to illustrate "obedience to the severe and strange call which when yielded to makes life simple." At the age of sixty he is found exclaiming, "Lord, let me not live to be useless." It is characteristic that at the age of eighty-six he should be saying, "Let us work now; we shall rest by and by." His physical capacity was such as to astonish feebler saints, and he added conscientious regimen to native endowment. In undergraduate days he had read a book by Dr. Cheyne, the Horace Fletcher of the period, and had put himself under abstemious rules. Temperance in food and drink became a lifelong habit. He once said, "I am as strong at eighty-one as I was at twenty-one, but abundantly more healthy." At the age of eighty-two

the incorrigibly industrious preacher remarks, "It is eleven years since I felt any such thing as weariness." We find him holding a meeting at eight in the evening and preaching at four o'clock the next morning, although five o'clock was a preferred hour. When the Methodist societies had won their way in the land it was discovered that not all the faithful were so enchanted with five o'clock as a service hour, whereupon the never-languid chief sees fit to allude to the days of his cure at Savannah:

> As soon as I set foot in Georgia, I began preaching at five in the morning; and every communicant, that is, every serious person in the town, constantly attended throughout the year; I mean, came every morning, winter and summer, unless in the case of sickness. They did so till I left the province.[1]

To the old saying about Wesley that when he was sick he preached himself well,

[1] *Journal*, iv. p. 276.

and that when he was weary he preached himself vigorous, it could be added that he wilfully ignored no hygienic law, although several times he writes of journeys in bad weather when he was "wet from morning till night; but I found no manner of inconvenience." Once, indeed, he can be detected confiding to his *Journal* that in a given indisposition he had neglected the rhubarb or the ipecac. He excuses himself for the omission on the ground that he has been too busy, and then he naïvely notes that he has recovered without the aid of the old stand-bys. At another time an adventure in Avalon has involved a stiff climb to Glastonbury Tower.

> I was weary enough when we came to Bristol, but I preached until all my complaints were gone; and I had now a little leisure to sit still and finish the Notes on the New Testament.

His time-thrift would assert itself all the more whenever the best-laid plans had

gone askew. Coming to a crossing at the Menai Straits and finding the tide adverse, Wesley "sat down in a little cottage for three or four hours, and translated Aldrich's *Logic*." The treatise was for the use of the lay preachers who by this time had become numerous in the Methodist societies. Kept indoors at another place, with a sprained ankle, he takes the opportunity to write a book of lessons for children, and also a Hebrew grammar for his preachers. An entry for January 6, 1754, Sunday, says:

> I began writing Notes on the New Testament, a work which I should scarce ever have attempted had I not been so ill as not to be able to travel or preach, and yet so well as to be able to read and write.

"Eia age, rumpe moras!" he exclaims, as he reminds his brother how they are getting on in years. Idleness could hardly be the foible of a gentleman who was

capable of saying, "At least we can walk twenty miles a day with our horses in our hands." For a man uninstructed in "New Thought" he managed well to combine economy of time with an absence of strain. When the worst comes to the worst in the matter of ship-sailing delays, he can recall and adapt the cheerful lines—

> There are, if rightly I methink,
> Five causes why a man should drink.

With a little alteration he gets something suitable for the sea-captains who with their lame excuses are less sea-going than they should be :

> There are, unless my memory fail,
> Five causes why we should not sail :
> The fog is thick ; the wind is high ;
> It rains ; or may do by and by ;
> Or—any other reason why.[1]

[1] *Journal*, ii. p. 49.

IX

METHODISM: A PERSONAL FAITH WITH SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Of the far-reaching consequences of the apostolate of Wesley and his company the world has long had proofs. As individuals were converted, that is to say as they exchanged the faith of a servant for the faith of a son, the first results apparent were in terms of personal experience, in the love, joy, peace, which in St. Paul's categories are the prelude to righteousness and long-suffering. At the outset Wesley had observed among the Moravians what he called "this terrible abuse" of preaching "Christ given for us." So, said he, "we began to insist more than ever upon 'Christ

living in us.'" Crisis was an almost indispensable element in the conversions, although there are responses to Wesley's preaching on the part of the "once-born" as well as on the part of those "twice-born" for whom conquest is achieved by means of self-despair and self-surrender. In their demand for the clear, if not instantaneous experience of conversion, the societies were, as Professor William James put it, following "on the whole the profounder spiritual instinct. The individual models . . . set up as typical and worthy of imitation are not only the more interesting dramatically, but psychologically they have been the more complete."[1]

Inevitably, as the men and women reached by the Evangel came into the transforming consciousness of communion with God, homes and communities reflected the change. At one place men are con-

[1] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 227.

verted whose business has been the buying and selling of uncustomed goods. The preaching to which they listened left no doubt that unless they ceased to do evil they could not learn to do well. Speaking of another region where men had previously been making a living by "robbing the king," Wesley reports, "Since they have cut off the right hand, the work of God sinks deep into their hearts." An increase of scrupulosity, of moral sensitiveness, was a steady accompaniment of the spiritual awakening. Always the preachers were facing the question of sin in the concrete, anti-social reality. In a Cornwall village two persons belonging to the society had been discovered selling their votes at election time. The manner of dealing with the evil was of a sort that went to the root of the trouble. To the jibe of the *Westminster Journal* that the minds of the vulgar had been darkened to a total

neglect of their civil and social duties, Wesley was able to reply: "Just the contrary: thousands in London, as well as elsewhere, have been enlightened to understand, and prevailed on to practise those duties, as they never did before." Readers of J. R. Green's *History of the English People* will remember how the enthusiastic philanthropies of the latter part of the eighteenth century are traced to the Wesleyan movement with its insistence on vital religious-moral processes. A social regeneration of England did take place, and it was the practical consequence of the arising of souls renewed in the power of God. Prison reform, the abolition of slavery, the attempts at popular education, what were these—even when undertaken by persons not nominally attached to the Wesleyan societies—but the coming to flower of the good tidings to the meek, in the healing of the broken in heart, and in

the opening of the prison to them that were bound? "In any case, the grand and solitary figure of Wesley seemed always in the front of whatever was making for righteousness. He breathed upon the evils of his time with a fiery breath of purification."[1]

That an attempt to live above the level of contemporary life should invite reprisal appeared to Wesley the logical outcome. Devotion to severer ethical standards, insistence also on the subjective side of religion: why should not this incur the antagonism of the unbelieving and secular-hearted? It must be borne in memory that Wesley had been willing to absent him from the felicity of certain social contacts, the Capuas of existence, that he might be God's servant to all classes of people. "I spent an hour at Mr. G.'s. I can trust myself about once a year in this

[1] *The British Weekly*, June 17, 1909.

warm sunshine, but not much oftener, or I should melt away." In the *Journal* for October 6, 1749, he writes :

> I then waited upon Mr. M. for an hour. Oh, how could I delight in such an acquaintance ! But the will of God be done. Let me "acquaint" myself "with Him," and it is enough. .

To some one who spoke to him of the vagabond life of his ministry he said, "Why indeed it is not pleasing to flesh and blood, and I would not do it if I did not believe in another world."

Convinced that any movement of real power must go from the bottom up, and not the other way, Wesley's interpretation of the spirit of the Gospel left him no alternative to serving the most lowly and unenlightened. In the earlier days of the movement there were occasional neurotic or hysterical or fanatical manifestations among the religiously awakened. Physical phenomena in the assemblies had a

character that might, and did, give a handle to the scornful. All the unwholesome spectacles put together are few enough to be, if not negligible, then, useful only for setting in relief the sane and life-giving quality of the work as a whole. Voltaire had spoken of atheism as the last refuge of religious scandal, but it is open to question whether in England the charge of "enthusiasm" was not a degree more portentous than the charge of atheism. The *Westminster Journal* called Wesley an "enthusiast," and the editor was invited to prove or to retract the charge. Faith working by love was the only enthusiasm Wesley would admit as being characteristic of the religious awakening. That he comprehended the nature of enthusiasm in the Deists' sense, and saw its menace, is abundantly plain when he so skilfully describes it in a letter to a fervent but not well-poised preacher :

I dislike something that has the appearance of enthusiasm; overvaluing feelings and inward impressions; mistaking the mere work of imagination for the voice of the Spirit; expecting the ends without the means; and undervaluing reason, knowledge, and wisdom in general.

Wesley need not be blamed if to certain of his contemporaries plain religion and "enthusiasm" were one and the same. It remains that against "enthusiasm" in the accepted eighteenth-century hostile meaning of the term, Wesley set his face like a flint.

Many a penalty was paid by the churchmen for preaching good tidings to the poor. Among their critics was Edward Gibson, ecclesiastical jurist and Bishop of London, who complained: "They have had the boldness to preach in the fields and other open places, and by public advertisement to invite the rabble to be their hearers." Dr. Gibson had the grace to

recant, as became a Christian and an authority on Canon Law. When it comes to delicate usages, a Gospel for the multitude may not be the equal of a Gospel for superior persons. Yet, the leaders being gentlemen (as they were in this instance, albeit with no "pedantry of gentlemanship") they could be magnanimous toward the ignorances and superstitions of the people among whom they laboured. Moreover, the refining fire that went through the heart of the convert was of an efficacy that could change a boor into an amiable person. Luther's typical "old woman in the chimney-corner with her Bible," who might know more of God than did all the doctors of theology, might be capable also of a finer humanity and grace than a high priestess of the proprieties. As it came to pass, the Methodists were for a half-century and more treated as a pariah class. So late as

1809, the Reverend Sydney Smith, a fellow-churchman of Wesley's, was writing in *The Edinburgh Review* of "the nasty and numerous vermin of Methodism."

As a means of sport the religionists were a big boon to the Philistines. A Newcastle Theatre presented a farce entitled, *Trick upon Trick, or Methodism Displayed.* George Whitefield had not been dead two months before Foote the actor had come upon the stage of an Edinburgh theatre imitating the preacher's appearance and manner of speaking. Public opinion was, this time, too much for the vulgarity of the actor, and the theatre was empty on the second evening. For daring to associate with Wesley, working men and women sometimes found themselves summarily discharged from employment. A housemaid whose conversion was accomplished with much physical manifestation was forbidden to

return to the house, her master saying he would have none in his house who had received the Holy Ghost.[1] There was a town in which three dissenting ministers refused the Communion to such of their people as would not refrain from going to the meetings of the societies. Moreover, the notion was energetically fostered that Wesley and his comrades were but papists in disguise; a notion for which an extreme high-churchmanship and an asceticism of practice may have been, at the beginning, superficially responsible. He comes to Epworth, his birthplace, where his father had been rector, and himself for a short time curate, and he is told that he may not preach in the church. It was therefore on the tomb of his father that, later in the Sabbath, he preached to such a crowd as had not before assembled in Epworth. On a day in 1743, five years after the

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 213.

Methodists had begun to lift their voices in the land, Wesley goes to the town of Wednesbury. Here, unfortunately, one of the lay-preachers had indulged in foolish denunciation of the Church people. Through what Wesley called the inexcusable folly of the zealous helper, it came to pass that the rector's former love was turned to hatred. At the afternoon service the rector pours out his wrath against the new teaching. "I think I never heard so wicked a sermon," says Wesley, "and delivered with such bitterness of voice and manner, as that which Mr. E. preached," and he adds :

> I knew what effect this must have in a little time, and therefore judged it expedient to prepare the poor people for what was to follow, that, when it came, they might not be offended. Accordingly, on Tuesday, 19th, I strongly enforced those words of our Lord, "If any man come after Me, and hate not . . . his own life, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not

bear his own cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."

While I was speaking, a gentleman rode up very drunk ; and, after many unseemly and bitter words, laboured much to ride over some of the people. I was surprised to hear he was a neighbouring clergyman. And this, too, is a man zealous for the Church ! Ah, poor Church, if it stood in need of such defenders ! [1]

At Wednesbury, five months later, Wesley had one of those demonstrations of animosity, which when they do not frighten a man are likely to strengthen the moral fibre. He was writing at Francis Ward's in the afternoon, and a cry arose that the mob had beset the house. "We want you to go with us to the Justice," explained the leaders. Their victim, having acquiesced heartily, a procession was formed, and a journey of two or three miles was taken in the rain at nightfall. The Justice being abed, his son was sent to ask the crowd what might be the matter. One answered,

[1] *Journal*, i. pp. 421, 422.

"Why, an't please you, they sing psalms all day; nay, and make folks rise at five in the morning; and what would your worship advise us to do?" To which the magisterial oracle: "To go home, and be quiet." Foiled here, there was nothing open but to try Justice Persehouse at Walsall. That dignitary was also under the necessity of sending word that he had gone to bed, and by this time the mob was disposed to turn again home and to act as convoy for their prey. All might have become quiet but for the arrival of a larger mob from Walsall, pouring in like a flood and driving away all the clergyman's former custodians.

To attempt speaking was vain; for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea; so they dragged me along till we came to the town, where seeing the door of a large house open, I attempted to go in; but a man, catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. They made no more stop till they had

carried me through the main street, from one end of the town to the other. I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open, I made toward it, and would have gone in; but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying, "They would pull the house down to the ground." However, I stood at the door, and asked, "Are you willing to hear me speak?" Many cried out, "No, no! knock his brains out; down with him; kill him at once." Others said, "Nay, but we will hear him first." I began asking, "What evil have I done? Which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?" and continued speaking for above a quarter of an hour, till my voice suddenly failed. Then the floods began to lift up their voice again; many crying out, "Bring him away; bring him away."[1]

In the meantime, continues Wesley, in the absorbing recital:

. . . my strength and my voice returned, and I broke out aloud into prayer. And now the man who had just before headed the mob, turned and said, "Sir, I will spend my life for you: follow

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 438 ff.

me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head. . . ." But on the bridge the mob rallied again ; we, therefore, went on one side, over the Mill-dam, and thence through the meadows, till a little before ten God brought me safe to Wednesbury ; having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands.

Reviewing the circumstances, all of which he is able to interpret religiously, he makes note of this fact:

From the beginning to the end I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my own study ; but I took no thought for one moment before another ; only once it came into my mind, that if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket ; for myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin coat and a light pair of boots.

X

WESLEY THE CHURCHMAN

Now that the fame of Wesley has survived Methodist adulation and Anglican patronage there is nothing to hinder a more objective treatment of the character and career of this presbyter of the Church of England, greatest of all her great and illustrious sons. Thirty millions of Methodist adherents, in churches separated from the Church of England, reflect in our modern world something of the inspiration associated with Wesley's name. Yet powerful as are the forces of denominational Methodism with its efficient organization on a national basis, its care for jurisdiction, its fidelity to Catholic faith,

its avoidance of caste vulgarities, and its unexcelled *esprit de corps*, it is not in institutional Methodism that the English churchman's highest achievement is revealed, but rather in the fact that he modified, and modified profoundly, the religious life of the Church and nation to which he belonged. The severance from the Church of the Methodist societies, fostered for a half-century by Anglican clergy, was in Wesley's eyes a deplorable thing; unless indeed, toward the end, he realized what is patent now to churchman and Methodist alike, namely, that the tides of the divine life in man do not always wait upon the official custodians of religion. Charles Wesley's querulous letter to the Rev. T. B. Chandler, April 28, 1785, is one of uncompromising objection to the idea of any separation from the Church of England, and it breathes a pained solicitude over "those poor sheep in the wilderness, the American Methodists,"

betrayed into a separation which their preachers and they no more intended than the Methodists in England. He saw in them only a new sect of Presbyterians. "They will lose all their usefulness and importance; they will turn aside to vain jangling; they will settle again upon their lees and, like other sects of Dissenters, come to nothing."[1] Without our going so far as to share Hazlitt's distrust of the prose style of poets, these so completely discredited predictions serve to remind us that the sweet singer of Methodism was a better psalmist than prophet. If the union of churches seems, in our time, a moral imperative, we must remember how dark were the hours of that early part of the eighteenth century when the Church saw not its visitation. If repentance came too late, we may recall Gladstone's observation

[1] For this letter in full, see W. J. Seabury, *Memoir of Bishop Seabury*, pp. 377-381.

on the uncanny capacity of an Establishment to prescribe correctly and skilfully for the patient who died yesterday. As Mr. Thomas Seccombe says, in accounting for the ultimate development of Wesleyanism outside the ecclesiastical pale :

> The Church at the close of George II.'s reign was (in a thoroughly worldly way) benevolent and philanthropic, and upon the whole decidedly prosperous. The old Protestant dissent seemed dwindling, and never had the prospect of a general comprehension seemed so likely to be eventually realized. The churchmen, however, in their complete indifference to the spiritual side of Christianity, and to the hidden spring that moves man to be religious, had entirely underestimated both the strength of the Protestant spirit and of the schismatic temper in the English race.[1]

Oblique and unwilling confirmation of the correctness of Mr. Seccombe's opinion is found in Dr. Secker, Archbishop of Canter-

[1] Thomas Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*, Introduction, p. xxviii.

bury. Writing at some date not far from July 13, 1760, to Dr. Samuel Johnson of King's College, New York, the ecclesiast has this to say :

> I am glad that the Clergy in your parts are orthodox. Mr. Maclaneghan gives them a very different character. I hope they will cut off all occasion from them who desire occasion against them, by preaching faithfully and frequently the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel ; which we in this nation have neglected too much, and dwelt disproportionately on morality and natural religion ; whence the Methodists have taken advantage to decry us, and gain followers.[1]

Church conditions in England, in Wesley's period, afforded an illustration of Archbishop Laud's famous plea, that there could be schism without separation, and separation without schism. There were priests in the Establishment whose careers were an embodied contradiction of the faith

[1] *The Life of Samuel Johnson, D.D., the first President of King's College, New York*, by Thomas Bradbury Chandler, D.D. (1805), p. 181.

and rule of the Church, yet they never dreamed of separating from that powerful body. Methodism in its ultimate organization became a Church separated from Anglicanism almost by as much as Anglicanism had itself separated from the mother Church, yet the schismatic temper was not a characteristic of the so-called founder of Methodism, who in his old age could say, in letters to Lord North and the Earl of Dartmouth, "I am a High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman." If any desire sympathetically to measure the scope of Wesley's churchmanship, we may turn to the reliable document, the *Journal*. Here we are on surer ground than we would be if we depended only upon occasional formal deliverances. Here we get at the man's mind and behaviour through a half-century. We are enabled to observe the schoolings of heart, the changes of opinion that go with growth,

an absorbing and involved story wherein the rabid rubricist of the Georgia mission becomes the religious primate of England.

Already we have seen how, in the Savannah parish, our rector was as rigid a disciplinarian as could be imagined. Even in the uttermost parts of the earth jurisdiction was not to be trifled with. Some person in Carolina, evidently a priest, had married several of Wesley's parishioners without either banns or licence. To put a stop to the goings-on, Wesley sets out in a sloop for Charleston, states the case to the Bishop of London's commissary, and obtains assurances that "no such irregularity should be committed for the future." Besides publicly expounding and defending the three Creeds, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the Homilies, he is prompt to set forth the grievous errors of the Church of Rome. At the same time he is disposed to remind himself that,

"with regard to eternity," a Deist is in a more dangerous state than a Papist. Toward Dissenters the feeling of our Oxford don is what you would expect. When the Williamson *v.* Wesley case is called, he jealously notes that on the Grand Jury there is one Papist, one professed Infidel, three Baptists and sixteen or seventeen other Dissenters. What the colonists thought of the clergyman is also a matter of record. The inventory of his foibles, as it appears in *A True and Historical Narrative of the State of Georgia*, includes the item following:

> Under an affected strict adherence to the Church of England, he most unmercifully damned all Dissenters of whatever denomination, who were never admitted to communicate with him until they first gave up their faith and principles entirely to his moulding and direction and, in confirmation thereof, declared their belief of the invalidity of their former baptism, and then to receive a new one from him. This was done publicly on the persons of Richard Turner, carpenter, and his son. Another instance was

that of William Gaff, who had always communicated and always conformed to his regulations, but was at last found out by Mr. Wesley to have been baptized by a Presbyterian Dissenter. The same thing was proposed to him; but Mr. Gaff, not inclinable to go that length, was ever thereafter excluded from the Communion.[1]

Who knows whether, in the radiant summer of the evangelical revival, Wesley would have been capable of writing, as did his brother Charles, to one of the foremost Methodist preachers, John Nelson: "John, I love thee from my heart: yet rather than see thee a Dissenting minister I wish to see thee smiling in thy coffin!" Miracles of grace were to be performed in the soul of the clergyman. They failed to eradicate a capacity of disdain toward Dissent. With the Savannah incumbency forty years behind him, we come upon a note like this, after he has been preaching in Mrs. Turner's chapel at Trowbridge: "As most

[1] *Journal*, Curnock edn., viii. p. 305.

of the hearers were Dissenters, I did not expect to do much good. However, I have done my duty : God will look to the event." [1]

There is a week in June of 1779 devoted to work in the Isle of Man, the itinerant being then seventy-six years old, a week full of satisfactions for the doughty chief. He tells us of visiting Bishop's Court, "where good Bishop Wilson resided near threescore years" ; he takes pleasure in the natural beauty of the island. He delights in the plain, artless, simple people, and particularly in the two-and-twenty stout, well-looking preachers of the Manx societies. All in all, he does not know of any circuit of societies the equal of this of the Isle of Man. And for final touch of beatitude, what could go beyond a state of affairs portrayed so ingenuously ?

Here are no Papists, no Dissenters of any

[1] *Journal*, iv. p. 195.

kind ; no Calvinists, no disputers. Here is no opposition either from the Governor, a mild, humane man, from the Bishop, a good man, or from the bulk of the clergy.[1]

Elsewhere he describes the Church of England : "It is not 'all the people of England.' Papists and Dissenters are no part thereof. It is not all the people of England except Papists and Dissenters. Then we should have a glorious Church indeed!"[2]

To renew the claim that Wesley was an inveterate churchman is not to ignore the genuinely Catholic traits in his disposition or to proclaim him impervious to the facts of life. The humanity of him overcame

[1] *Journal*, iv. p. 211. For a slight verbal relevance, as well as for contrast, one may recall Gladstone's perplexity, when a scholar in Christ Church, over the mystery of religious apathy at Oxford, a place safely hedged against the incursion of foes. "We have no Papists, no Socinians, no Dissenters of any class. Where, then, are the fruits?" See D. C. Lathbury, *Correspondence on Church and Religion of William Ewart Gladstone.*

[2] *Letters of John Wesley*, selected by George Eayrs (1915), p. 91.

whatever might have been obstinately doctrinaire, and his hospitality of mind came to be an element of greatness. That he made changes slowly can be seen from the fact that seven years after the religious movement has been in progress he is as outspoken as ever in asserting priestly prerogative on the basis of Apostolical Succession. The time comes when the vehement prepossessions of his early training are to be recognized as such. For example, the statement that, in the primitive and apostolic churchmanship, presbyters and bishops are essentially one order might be thought of as a commonplace of information. Nevertheless, when the discovery is made by a priest who has been reared on the stark, if sacrosanct, inaccuracy of the Preface to the Ordinal, the old idol is not forsaken without a pang. Lord King's treatise helped Wesley to see, what Anglican learning has long

substantiated, that the early Christian churches were independent of episcopal control in the old Catholic sense, and that the three distinct orders of ministry did not then exist. The acknowledgment in no wise affects Wesley's conviction as to the general soundness and effectiveness of Church of England polity, but it does serve him as a further invitation to put on a generous mind.

Once, after reading Neal's *History of the Puritans*, he sets down his reflections :

> I stand in amaze. First, at the execrable spirit of persecution which drove those venerable men out of the Church, and with which Queen Elizabeth's Clergy were as deeply tinctured as ever Queen Mary's were ; secondly, at the weakness of those holy confessors, many of whom spent so much of their time and strength in disputing about surplices and hoods, or (about) kneeling at the Lord's Supper ![1]

And for another indication of the fact

[1] *Journal*, ii. p. 11.

that Wesley's impatience with Nonconformity, in its theory and in certain contemporary representatives, was not allowed to run into hopeless bigotry, we turn to this:

> In my hours of walking I read Dr. Calamy's *Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life.* What a scene is opened here. In spite of all the prejudice of education I could not but see that the poor Nonconformists had been used without either justice or mercy; and that many of the Protestant Bishops of King Charles had neither more religion nor humanity than the Popish Bishops of Queen Mary.[1]

To be sure, he also learns that those apostles of religious liberty, the New England worthies, were not above harrying the Quakers. Whereupon he slyly exclaims, "Oh, who would have looked for Father Inquisitors at Boston!"

Were any foil needed by which to set off the qualities of Wesley's churchman-

[1] *Journal*, ii. p. 279.

ship it could be furnished in the phrases of John H. Newman's notorious denial, in 1862, of the rumour that he was about to forsake Rome for the ancestral Church :

> I do hereby profess, *ex animo*, with an absolute and internal assent and consent, that Protestantism is the dreariest of possible religions ; that the thought of the Anglican service makes me shiver, and the thought of the Thirty-nine Articles makes me shudder. Return to the Church of England ! No ! "The net is broken and we are delivered."[1]

To take these flat-footed protestations in their order, and testing Wesley by their aid, we have the consideration that to his dying day he was a convinced and devoted son of the Protestant Reformed Church of England, and that he cherished the right of private judgment as behoved a member of that Society. As for the Anglican service, toward which Newman was to

[1] Wilfrid Ward, *Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, i. p. 561.

become so genially patronizing, it was cherished by our churchman because its felicity of form and expression offered a medium most meet for the telling of the soul's aspirations, as also a means whereby divine truth could most fitly be set before the mind of the worshipper. Free prayer may be an inescapable accompaniment of spiritual renaissance without thereby cancelling the validity of treasured devotional forms. Whatever the exaltation that was Wesley's when a new world came into his ken, it was not an experience alien from what the Church in her formularies and use of Holy Scripture had set forth as a Gospel. "The plain old religion of the Church of England," he called it, "which is now almost everywhere spoken against under the new name of Methodism." We have seen how, on the great day of his life, his longings found voice in the "De Profundis" chanted in St. Paul's Cathedral. The next

afternoon, in tremulous joy, he is again a worshipper in St. Paul's. There, as he tells us, he could taste the good word of God in the anthem, "My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord : with my mouth will I ever be showing forth Thy truth from one generation to another." On the day following he is in some heaviness, and he gets a helping word from the Moravian, Mr. Telchig. In the afternoon this is reinforced in the Cathedral service as he listens to the anthem, "My soul truly waiteth still upon God . . . He is my defence, so that I shall not greatly fall. Oh, put your trust in Him always, ye people ; pour out your hearts before Him ; for God is our hope." Instinctively and with an affection unfeigned did he resort to the Book of Common Prayer. The musical phrases of the Coverdale Psalter were ever being put to living uses. An echo of that exultant hour in St. Paul's is heard in such

a scene as Wesley tells of a few years later :

> In the evening our souls were so filled with the spirit of prayer and thanksgiving, that I could scarce tell how to expound, till I found where it was written, "My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord. . . ."[1]

It was with filial pride, not with critic condescension, that toward the end of his days the churchman wrote :

> I believe there is no Liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England.

As for proof of his professions, there is his life-long custom of using the prayers in the informal gatherings, in the societies, in the groups that would gather at an inn to meet him as he journeyed. That his devotion to the Liturgy was of a discriminating, and therefore the most respectful, sort may be seen in the method of his recension of the

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 296.

Prayer Book, published 1784, in view of the needs of Methodists in America who shared with other Anglicans in the deprivations due to the Church of England's admitted steady neglect of her children in the United States. In the light of present-day discussion of Prayer Book revision, the changes made by Wesley are particularly engaging. They anticipate not a few of the improvements desired by modern Anglicans of broad sympathy.

Little alteration is made in the following edition (says the Preface), except in the following instances:

1. Most of the holy days (so called) are omitted, as at present answering no valuable end.

2. The service of the Lord's Day, the length of which has been often complained of, is considerably shortened.

3. Some sentences in the offices of Baptism, and for the Burial of the Dead, are omitted; and,

4. Many Psalms left out, and many parts of the others, as being highly improper for the mouths of a Christian congregation.

The significance of Wesley's dealing with the Prayer Book is not in his having boldly removed certain passages, in pursuance of a Protestant principle, but rather in the fact that the Liturgy was to continue with those churchmen whose association together as Methodists was to involve, finally, a separate churchly existence. To this day you may find Methodist churches using, of a Sunday, the Morning Prayer or the Office of Holy Communion in forms differing from the Anglican no more than do the forms of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. Even in those sections of the Methodist Communion, where the Order for Morning Prayer has been forsaken, the Administration of the Lord's Supper is still according to the usage of the Church of England.

And if, unlike Newman, the Calvinist evangelical whose quest was to end where the waters of the Tiber wash the walls of

the City of God, John Wesley did not "shiver" at the thought of the Anglican service, neither did he "shudder" at the thought of the Thirty-nine Articles. Honest adhesion to VI. and XXI. prevented him from the accepting of any such "catholic" principles as appeared out of harmony with the declarations of Holy Writ. He gloried in the intrinsic Protestantism of the Church of England's appeal, in these articles, to Bible authority as against Conciliar deliverances, whether of Trent or of Dort. Of these two Councils he once observed, somewhat caustically, "What a pity it is that the holy synod of Trent and that of Dort did not sit at the same time, nearly allied as they were, not only as to the purity of doctrine which each of them established, but also as to the spirit wherewith they acted; if the latter did not exceed."[1] When Wesley had

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 318.

begun to incur criticism for preaching the novelty of "the faith of a son," he had recourse to the Homily of Justification, reprinting it for its usefulness in setting forth that new teaching which was the old, "a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." [1]

Of the Thirty-nine Articles, Wesley's recension of the Prayer Book for Methodists in America retained only twenty-five. An examination of that piece of editorial labour goes to show the conservative and responsible spirit of a widely influential leader. Some of the Anglican Articles were plainly not negotiable apart from the Royal Arms. As it was, the Methodists had the honour of being the first churchmen in the United States to set forth the Articles formally.[2] The second religious body to adopt the Articles of the Anglican tradition was the

[1] Art. XI.

[2] Henry Wheeler, *History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1908).

Protestant Episcopal Church. Its first revision was less conservative than Wesley's, so that the Prayer Book of 1785 appears with the Thirty-nine cut down to twenty.[1]

Harking back to Cardinal Newman's rhetorical eruption against the Church in which he had been reared, we see that he held out no hope of his ever craving the shelter of the old home. "Return to the Church of England! No! 'The net is broken and we are delivered.'" Without begrudging this veritable separatist whatever meed of honour has been given him by the churchmen whose company he fled, we may usefully compare his behaviour with Wesley's in such wise as to bring into relief the non-separatist intention of the Methodist. In our day, when the moral

[1] The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, as revised and proposed to the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church, at a Convention of the said Church. . . . Held in Philadelphia, from September 27 to October 7, 1785.

sense of the plain Christian is revolted at the spectacle of disunity, particularly revolted at the sight of sacerdotal sectarianism pursuing its divisive course under catholic banners, the only use of referring to an ancient controversy would be for the light thereby thrown on our present duty of endeavouring to consolidate the Christian forces. Lord Morley has lately lifted from oblivion a saying of Archbishop Whately's about the Orangemen's fondness for the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne. "It is doing what among the heathen was reckoned an accursed thing, keeping a trophy in repair." So far as a rapprochement between the Anglican and the Wesleyan churches were sincerely desired, the project would, I earnestly believe, be helped and in no way hindered by a fresh examination of the motives of the eighteenth-century churchmen who were none the less of the Church of England although bearing

a party name. Not so much, then, by way of maintaining a thesis, or labouring a point, as for the sake of a cumulative impression concerning Wesley's lifelong loyalty to the Church, I would like to bring together certain informal passages culled from our prime source-book, the *Journal*, or from Mr. Eayrs's pleasant edition of the *Letters* :

June 17, 1739.—In the afternoon I saw poor Richard Tompson, who had left our society and the Church. We did not dispute, but pray ; and in a short space the scales fell from his eyes. He gladly returned to the Church, and was in the evening readmitted into our society.

April 28, 1745.—I preached at five. . . . A plain man came to me afterward and said, "Sir, I find Mr. Hutchings and you do not preach the same way. You bid us read the Bible, and pray, and go to Church ; but he bids us let all this alone, and says if we go to Church and Sacrament we shall never come to Christ."

May 2, 1745.—I rode to Markfield. The church was full, although the notice was so short. But I was sorry to hear some of the neighbour-

ing churches are likely to be empty enough: for the *still Brethren*, I found, had spread themselves into several of the adjacent parishes. And the very first *sins* their hearers leave off are reading the Bible and running to Church and Sacrament.

May 23, 1745.—We had one more earnest conversation with one that had often strengthened our hands, but now earnestly exhorted us (what is man!) to return to the Church, to renounce all our lay assistants, to leave off field-preaching, and to accept of honourable preferment.

December 27, 1745.—Having received a long letter from Mr. Hall, earnestly pressing my brother and me to renounce the Church of England (for not complying with which advice he soon renounced us), I wrote him. . . .

October 16, 1753.—(Bedford.) It is amazing that any congregation should be found here, considering what stumbling-blocks have been thrown in their way. Above fourteen years ago, Mr. Rogers, then curate of St. Paul's, preached the pure gospel with general acceptance. A great awakening began, and continually increased, till the poor weathercock turned Baptist. He then preached the absolute decrees with all his might; but in a while the wind changed again, and he turned and sank into the German whirlpool.

April 30, 1755.—We began reading together, "A Gentleman's Reasons for his Dissent from the Church of England." . . . did not yield us one proof that it is lawful for us (much less our duty) to separate from it.

August 28, 1756.—My brother and I closed the Conference by a solemn declaration of our purpose never to separate from the Church ; and all our brethren concurred therein.

March 6, 1760.—(A remonstrance against the action of certain lay preachers who had given the Sacrament at Norwich.) They did it without any ordination. . . . Do you think they acted right ? If the other preachers follow their example, not only separation but general confusion must follow. My soul abhors the thought of separating from the Church of England.[1]

August 4, 1766.—At one I preached at Bingley, but with a heavy heart, finding so many of the Methodists here, as at Haworth, perverted by the Anabaptists. I see clearer and clearer, none will keep to us unless they keep to the Church. Whoever separate from the Church will separate from the Methodists.

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[1] George Eayrs, *The Letters of John Wesley.*

July 13, 1769.—. . . Thence I rode on to Carlow. The Under-Sheriff had promised the use of the town hall; but the High Sheriff, coming to town, would not suffer it. I thank him. For, by this means, I was driven to the barrack-field, where were twice as many as the hall could have contained; over and above many of the poor Papists, who durst not have come into it. Afterwards I met the little society. I used to wonder they did not increase: now I should wonder if they did; so exquisitely bitter are the chief of them against the Church. I solemnly warned them against this evil; and some of them had ears to hear.

June 16, 1770.—I found our preacher, James Brownfield, had just set up for himself. The reasons he gave for leaving the Methodists were (1) that they went to Church; (2) that they held Perfection. . . . *Sunday*, 17th.—We had a poor sermon at Church. However, I went again in the afternoon, remembering the words of Mr. Philip Henry, "If the preacher does not know his duty, I bless God that I know mine."

September 4, 1785.—Finding a report had been spread abroad that I was just going to leave the Church, to satisfy those that were grieved concerning it, I openly declared in the evening

that I had now no more thought of separating from the Church than I had forty years ago.

July 25, 1786.—Our Conference began. About eighty preachers attended. . . . On Thursday in the afternoon we permitted any of the society to be present, and weighed what was said about separating from the Church. But we all determined to continue therein, without one dissenting voice; and I doubt not but this determination will stand, at least till I am removed into a better world.

January 2, 1787.—I went over to Deptford; but, it seemed, I was got into a den of lions. Most of the leading men of the society were mad for separating from the Church. I endeavoured to reason with them, but in vain; they had neither sense nor even good manners left. At length, after meeting the whole society, I told them: "If you are resolved, you may have your service in church hours; but remember, from that time you will see my face no more." This struck deep; and from that hour I have heard no more of separating from the Church.

July 6, 1788.—I fain would prevent the members here from leaving the Church; but I cannot do it. As Mr. G. (Joshua Gibson, curate of Epworth) is not a pious man, but

rather an enemy to piety, who frequently preaches against the truth, and those that hold it and love it, I cannot with all my influence persuade them either to hear him, or to attend the Sacrament administered by him. If I cannot carry this point even while I live, who then can do it when I die? And the case of Epworth is the case of every church where the minister neither loves nor preaches the gospel. The Methodists will not attend his ministrations. What, then, is to be done?

August 4, 1788.—One of the most important things considered at this Conference was that of leaving the Church. The sum of a long conversation was, (1) That, in a course of fifty years, we had neither premeditately nor willingly varied from it in one article either of doctrine or discipline; (2) That we were not yet conscious of varying from it in any point of doctrine; (3) That we have in a course of years, out of necessity, not choice, slowly and warily varied in some points of discipline, by preaching in the fields, by extemporary prayer, by employing lay preachers, by forming and regulating societies, and by holding yearly Conferences. But we did none of these things till we were convinced we could no longer omit them but at the peril of our souls.

WESLEY THE CHURCHMAN

From another angle we come upon hints and gleams such as these :

I heard two useful sermons at our parish church (Liverpool). . . . I pity those who "can learn nothing at Church."

(Prescot.) The vicar preached an excellent sermon on "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world ; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

March 25, 1767.—(Congleton.) It seems, the behaviour of the Society in this town has convinced all the people in it but the Curate, who still refuses to give the Sacrament to any that will not promise to hear these preachers no more.

April 24, 1788.—(Wesley is in his eighty-fourth year.) About ten we began the service in the church at Todmorden, crowded sufficiently. . . . We had a pleasant road from thence to Burnley, where a multitude of people were waiting. But we had no house that could contain them. Just then the rain ceased : so we went into the inn yard, which contained them well. . . . *April* 27.—I preached at Haworth church in the morning, crowded sufficiently ; as was Bingle church in the afternoon ; but as

very many could not get in, Mr. Wrigley preached to them in the street, so that they did not come in vain.

Good Friday, March 29, 1782.—I came to Macclesfield just time enough to assist Mr. Simpson in the laborious service of the day. I preached for him morning and afternoon, and we administered the Sacrament to about thirteen hundred persons. While we were administering I heard a low, soft, solemn sound, just like that of an Aeolian harp. It continued for five or six minutes, and so affected many, that they could not refrain from tears; it then gradually died away. Strange that no other organist (that I know) should think of this!

May 6, 1759.—(Liverpool.) I received much comfort at the Old Church in the morning, and at St. Thomas's in the afternoon. It was as if both the sermons had been made for me. I pity those who can find no good at Church. But how should they, if prejudice come between? an effectual bar to the grace of God.

In the event, Wesley took steps whose logical consequence was a religious organization distinct from the Church of England.

It was the need of ministering to Methodists in America that had led Wesley to implore Bishop Lowth to ordain men who could do this work. The Bishop's refusal was of a piece with the steady, not to say callous, indifference of the authorities toward the plight of American churchmen. One has only to read such letters from Bishops of London and Archbishops of Canterbury as are preserved to us in Dr. Chandler's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, of King's College, New York, to see how prudential, political considerations weighed more than the cure of souls. As Professor W. J. Seabury stated it, to the faith of a churchman the want of Bishops in the Colonies not only involved incompleteness of Church organization, but also "endangered the perpetuity of spiritual life." We know what the American churchmen did in the premises. Samuel Seabury obtained episcopal consecration in the

Scotch succession when he found that the Church of England would not make him Bishop. A beginning in America had therefore to be made with a bishop upon whose title there was necessarily a cloud.[1] Moreover, it has since become open to question whether the first bishop ever received Christian baptism, unless baptism in a Congregational church could be looked upon as valid.[2] Wesley also had seen, in the apathy of the Establishment toward the Colonies and the United States, a menace to the perpetuity—in the actual rather than sacramental sense—of spiritual life. Instead of resorting to Scotch bishops for aid, he united with fellow-presbyters of the Church of England in bestowing presbyterial ordination on those preachers, other than English clergy, who were going to America. That ordaining act, if you

[1] Charles A. Briggs, *Church Unity*, p. 138.
[2] W. J. Seabury, *Memoir of Bishop Seabury*, p. 2 f.

are to go by the book, was *ipso facto* separation. To say that presbyterial ordination was held by early Anglicans to be, under stress of circumstances, entirely valid does not defend Wesley from the technical charge. Life defied legality. "The legal mind at once decided that authority lay in the written thing, not in the living thing, that the Church was founded not upon Peter, who represents humanity (failures included), but upon parchment."[1] Criticism of the innovation could come with little grace from rulers in the Establishment who sanctioned arrangements by which, as James Martineau said, "the most loyal of religious bodies was absolutely repulsed from Conformity." Extirpative zeal went so far as to fine a poor man twenty pounds for allowing in his house a meeting of friends for prayer and praise. There was no preaching at

[1] Philip Whitwell Wilson, *Why We Believe*, p. 61.

all. Reporting on this, autumn, 1790, Wesley says :

> All the justices averred the Methodists could have no relief from the Act of Toleration, because they went to Church ; and that, so long as they did so, the Conventicle Act should be executed upon them. Last Sunday, when one of our preachers was beginning to speak to a quiet congregation, a neighbouring justice sent a constable to seize him, though he was licensed, and would not release him until he had paid twenty pounds, telling him his license was good for nothing, because he was a Churchman.

It is a high-minded, reasoned defence of the step taken regarding American Methodists that is set forth in Wesley's famous letter of September 10, 1784, a recognition of leadings of the Divine Spirit in regions for which the official Church had not responsibly prepared to labour. Wesley knew that the body was more than raiment, and just as Samuel Seabury could serve the Protestant

Episcopal Church as Bishop, despite the fact that his consecration was not according to English Canon Law, so it was evident to sincerity and good sense that religion was more to be desired than regularity. "If any one is minded," said Wesley, "to dispute concerning Diocesan Episcopacy, he may dispute. But I have better work." It need not escape our attention that as late as 1786, after the American Methodists had formally organized and—to Wesley's unfeigned horror—elected and consecrated Bishops, the English leader wrote to Freeborn Garretson with reference to procedure in the New World :

> Wherever there is any Church service, I not approve of any appointment the same hour ; because I love the Church of England, and would assist, not oppose it, all I can.[1]

Here and there a pedant may still arise to dismiss Wesley and all his works on the

[1] Eayrs's edition, *Letters of John Wesley*, p. 272.

ground that he did transgress canon law. No doubt the same objector would scorn as Jesuitical the suggestion that Catholic principles may outwardly be contravened in the interest of their true essence. The late Bishop Satterlee of Washington, D.C., was an ardent supporter of the Protestant Episcopal Mission in Mexico. The Mission now numbers some two thousand communicants, and it is known in Episcopalian circles as the Mexican Church. Bishop Charles H. Brent, in describing Dr. Satterlee's approval of the arrangement "to intrude in the domain of the venerable and fully organized Church which had held jurisdiction for centuries," tells us that the vocation of the Church of Bishop Satterlee's allegiance "demanded that in given circumstances she should organize in Roman Catholic countries. Nor was he looking for sectarian glory in advocating this course. He felt that true Catholicity

demanded it."[1] Perhaps this is the disposition that George Whitefield had in mind when he said of Howell Harris, "He is of a most catholic spirit, and therefore is styled a dissenter."

Burke's inability to draw up an indictment against an entire people should be thought of when considering the Church of England and the Evangelical Revival. Fortunately the narrative can be reviewed without partisanship. It would seem that the Church at heart was proud of Wesley. For a lifetime he had served at her altars. His last years witnessed memorable scenes, the fitting complement to occurrences of a half-century before, with handsome expiations for the former slowness of heart to believe. When were the churches and the cathedrals, and even the University Church of St. Mary's, more thronged with eager and expectant worshipping folk? And

[1] Charles H. Brent, *A Master Builder.*

what, indeed, could Wesley have accomplished without the affectionate co-operation of a not inconsiderable number of the clergy who, from Archbishop Potter to Mr. Grimshaw of Haworth, stood by him through evil report and good report?

XI

WESLEY THE HUMAN

Lest, having put into prominence the churchly concerns which bulked in Wesley's life story, we should lose perspective, it is agreeable to return to aspects of his career in which a broad humanity found other scope. Critical estimates of the preacher easily pass into eulogy, not because he was a bundle of priggish virtues, but for the same reason as that by which the vigour of an oak tree always inclines us to make little of its knotted coat. Few men have been subject to keener scrutiny, and none have more worthily met the ordeal. An anthology of Wesley's limitations might be compiled from the mass of literature

centring around his name. He believed in witchcraft, and disliked any scepticism about demons, on the ground that doubt about devils involved doubt about Holy Scripture. The ordinary reader can be merciful to a clergyman whose date was nearer than is ours to the date of the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., with its form of exorcism at the Baptism of Infants. This man who declared, "We think, and let think," could make the vicinage uncomfortable for one whose thoughts were much at variance from the standard of the Articles and Homilies. And he was equal to sustaining an aversion such as he had toward Count Zinzendorf. Indeed, Wesley kept more than one *bête noire* in his backyard.

A writer in the *Cambridge History* speaks of our preacher's "aspect of imperious tyrannic strength." There is general agreement that at least one ponti-

fex maximus was missed by the Church of Rome when she permitted the Protestant Reformation. None believed more firmly in Wesley's autocratic capacity than did the persons toward whom he evinced it. "I determined to mend them or end them." He cuts off triflers "at one stroke." Toward his wife he could be magisterial without mercy. Notwithstanding, he was usually a leader rather than a driver, with an influence that could have been wielded only as men believed in his humble sincerity. Of his austerities of personal discipline, especially when he set out on his work, one has to speak with the respect always due to the spirit, if not the method, of a self-denying zeal. No doubt the ascetic blight was to blame for his not having married Grace Murray, a woman who could have been a comrade. Perhaps the awkward marriage ultimately achieved, making him of the fellowship of Job and

Socrates, had reactions of value for his public work. The poise of Wesley was the control of a rich nature. To the end he was the humanist, with warm susceptibilities, tremulously ready to see the charm of exquisite and precious things, to value sheltered nooks, and homes of intellectual response. "I rode on to Mr. Marshal's at Guiseley, the Capua of Yorkshire.

Hic nemus, hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata.

'Tis well God is here, or who could bear it?"

Mr. George Eayrs has done a service to the memory of Wesley's most intimate friend among laymen, Ebenezer Blackwell. A banker for fifty years, chief partner in Martin's, Change Alley, Lombard Street, Blackwell had a country home, "The Limes," at Lewisham. It was, says Mr. Eayrs, "the ever-open and delightful resting-place of the brothers, especially of John. During forty years he found there what his aristocratic cultured nature ap-

preciated keenly, although he cheerfully dispensed with them for his work's sake, —quiet, ample comfort, refinement, congenial friends, and the charms of a wealthy English home amid beautiful surroundings. Much of his best literary work was done there."

When you hear Wesley describing the effect of the singing of a hundred trebles in the service at Bolton, you know that the missioner is a musician. He occasionally allowed himself the treat of listening to an oratorio : the *Messiah*, *Elijah*, *Judith*, *Ruth*. Sometimes he spent an evening with his musically gifted nephews. The son of one of them, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, was organist of the Chapel Royal. He composed many hymn tunes, notably "Aurelia," and he died in 1876. Wesley, as the ambassador to the lowly, was not completely disfranchised from the polite world. He was not above taking ad-

vantage of the honourable opportunity of being in the robing-room when King George is arrayed for coronation. Nor was he too busy to sit for his portrait ; but he preferred the artist who worked quickly. The old warrior writes January 5, 1789 :

> At the earnest desire of Mrs. Tighe, I once more sat for my picture. Mr. Romney is a painter indeed. He struck off an exact likeness at once, and did more in one hour than Sir Joshua did in ten.[1]

Thanks to the *Journal*, with its incidental allusions, we have many an engaging proof that the man whose preaching had a temper touched with flame was alert to the comedy as well as to the tragedy of life. Humour, of the sort defined by Thackeray as a mixture of love and wit, often came in to relieve a strain. Comments on congregations and services are given a light, not trivial touch. A sub-

[1] George Eayrs, *Letters of John Wesley*, p. 289.

acid flavour is to be discerned at times. We are told of a Church whose choir arrangements were marked with a finitude that makes them look familiar to a cynic. An anthem was sung, but "twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves." The Sternhold and Hopkins psalmody, whose doggerel held potent sway in the Church, was a sore trial to our itinerant. One day he is at a place where what is being said makes him fear that the weak might be caused to stumble; "but God took away my fear, in a manner I did not expect, even by the words of Thomas Sternhold: they were these (sung immediately after the sermon):[1]

> Thy mercy is above all things,
> O God; it doth excel;
> In trust whereof, as in Thy wings,
> The sons of men shall dwell."

Sometimes he confides to his paper that he has been preaching to a "quiet, stupid

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 157.

congregation," or to "a civil, unconcerned congregation." Addressing a large company at Durham, in a pleasant meadow near the water's edge, he is reminded, by the behaviour of three or four gentlemen, of the honest man in London who was so gay and unconcerned when Dr. Sherlock was preaching on the Day of Judgment. One asked, "Do you not hear what the doctor says?" He answered, "Yes, but I am not of this parish."

Again, he demurely reports, "I left them very well satisfied with the preacher and with themselves." The instances of insensibility are relatively few. The foremost impression from the service reports is one of preacher and people sharing in a not too elusive gladness of heart. "I was myself much comforted in comforting the weary and heavy laden." It was this access of joy to human lives that constituted the first mark of the spiritual

visitation. Between that period and our own the long years have intervened, yet do we not stand to be refreshed and sustained as we recall the legend of one who carried through life his cup of honour unspilled?

Come where the Abbey's great lantern burns full
o'er the wave:
Once this lamp of St. Peter was low and dim;
Then Christ to his English another Apostle gave;
Souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord for him.[1]

[1] Jane T. Stoddart.

THE END

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